Annual Report

of the Committee on Seamen and Soldiers.

Were we about to present a report upon the subject of Foreign Missions, we ~~would~~ should confidently expect from all, serious attention and prayerful interest. Perhaps every one of us has embalmed in his heart the memory of some devoted herald of the cross, whose history we have perused and reperused with ever increasing interest until the beloved Missionary has entwined himself in all our affections. We now think of him only as an attached and revered friend whom we have loved for his piety and zeal - whom we have accompanied in his perilous wanderings - with whom we have sympathized in all the vicissitudes of his life, and over whom we have wept when in the midst of his philanthropic toils and his prospects of future usefulness, far away from friends and home, and all that the heart holds dear on earth, he sweetly breathed out his soul into the hands of his Redeemer. The affection which we cherish for a friend we invariably transfer, at least in some degree, to all his friends and all the objects of his love. In like manner some of the affection which we cherish toward our favorite Missionary we are sure to transfer to the cause of Missions itself. Hence whatever relates to this cause never fails to awaken in our bosoms a lively and lasting interest. Besides all the facts on the subject of Missions are of a more tangible character than those of most of the other benevolent institutions which distinguish our age. A Missionary Station is not a floating vessel ever varying its position as tossed to and fro by the uncertain winds of heaven, and which too is constantly changing its occupants.

On the contrary it is a fixed point. We can deliberately rest our eyes upon it. We can become familiarly acquainted with all its inhabitants learn to its full extent their degradation and plainly trace the work of God as it is advancing in their midst. But perhaps no consideration has given to the cause of Missions more interest in the minds of the pious, than that it is the means indispensible to the conversion of the world. With this cause we have been accustomed to associate that bright picture of the piety and peace of the Millenial days which fancy loves to paint, and which many great and precious promises in the word of God induce us to hope will yet be realised. We thus perceive that in whatever aspect we view the Missionary enterprise it is alike calculated to appeal in the strongest manner to the imaginations of men, and through the imagination to make its way to their hearts. We rejoice that it is so. We rejoice that an enterprise so noble and destined to terminate in such glorious results- an enterprise which was first devised and promoted by the founder of our religion is capable of taking a hold upon the affections of men yet it should never be forgotten that the importance of an object is not always in a direct ratio to the degree in which it impresses our imagination. On the contrary we are too prone to be unduly influenced by that which is palpable to our senses, or which may be vividly delineated by a high wrought and morbid imagination. While then we cheerfully admit the importance of Missions and the other benevolent operations of the day, and while we promise to cooperate with you in using every justifiable means to promote them, at the same time we beg your attention and your prayers upon a subject which will afford but little to gratify morbid fancy - yet much to interest the heart that loves the cause of God and immortal souls.

Time we cannot commend to your attention Apostles and Martyrs, to the cause of Seamen who may enchant your affections by their brilliant exploits and heroic fortitude. Those who have dedicated themselves to this service and have endured perhaps all the privations and toils of a foreign Missionary, at present fill but a small place in the public eye, and are too generally regarded as a sting a subordinate part in the conversion of the world. Our fields of labor too are moving points. You can but just glance at them and they are gone, while most of the characters introduced

are only seen once or twice and then disappear to be heard of no more. On this account it is very difficult to estimate the success employed which attends the means used for the moral renovation of seamen. Our Chaplains frequently use language like the following "I am much encouraged in my labors here; but, from the very nature of the Congregation, composed of those who are coming and going, it is impossible to know the result, or how much of the seed, that seems to take root, will escape the tares, and bring forth the fruits of peace and true holiness." E. N. Sawtell. But notwithstanding the disadvantages under which we thus necessarily labor, we would still appeal to your hearts and consciences in behalf of the cause we have espoused by assuring you that there are now two million of our fellow men leading the life of Seamen. Comparatively few of them have yet been brought beneath the influence of the means of grace, and in addition to the other evils of their situation they are almost entirely excluded from the sympathies of domestic and social life, and the restraints of public sentiment. Their immortal interests are as dear to them and as valuable as our own, and these two million of fellow beings probably exert a greater influence on the moral destiny of Man, than twenty millions of settled inhabitants, who never pass the mountains that bound their native vallies. While unconverted they exert in every corner of the globe an extensive and demoralizing influence, calculated to counteract every effort to promote the advance of the Redeemer's Kingdom. But when the subjects of renewing grace, they become zealous and efficient missionaries of the cross. Numerous undoubted facts attest the truth of this statement. After alluding to facts on this subject the Rev. Mr. Sawtell of Havre says "truly a Christian Sailor makes a good Missionary. Let every vessel that floats be supplied with Bibles, and tracts, and useful books, and every sailor a Christian, and it is an extending wedge to all nations under heaven; the highway of the Lord is then prepared for the speedy redemption of the world. Who then, that loves the prosperity of Zion, and prays "thy kingdom Come," Can look with indifference upon the cause of Seamen?"

We have dwelt the longer on these preliminary remarks because in presenting our Annual Report we deemed it our duty to advert to the signs of the times on this important subject, and because we believe that the most ill omened sign of the times for the poor Sailor is the indifference with which the subject of his conversion is yet too generally contemplated. Contemplated did we say? We mistake. Were it but contemplated by the pious of our own and other lands, it could not fail to elicit deep feeling and corresponding action. But the evil is, this is a neglected a forgotten subject. We know there are exceptions to this remark, and it is upon these exceptions and the sure promises of God, that we repose our hopes. But we appeal to your own observation of facts. Are there not many towns and counties too, within the U.S.A. into which not a single copy of the Sailors Magazine finds its way? In by far the greater part of our country, are not the spiritual wants of the Sailor very seldom, if ever, made the topic of thought and conversation, or the subject of that effectual fervent prayer of the Righteous which availeth much? If so is it not our duty, as we love the immortal souls of Seamen and as we desire the extension of the walls of Zion, to use all the means in our power to arrouse the Christian community from their apathy on this interesting subject? It is only when the Church and individually offer up the prayer of faith shall liberaly contribute according to her means, that the promises of God will permit us to hope for a signal outpouring of the Spirit upon those who navigate our waters.

And yet our indulgent Father has richly blest the feeble means thus far employed to promote the salvation of their souls. Since your last Reporter gave you a correct history of the operations of the Seamen's Friends Society and those of the various societies of the kind established in our seaports, from their foundation to the date of his report, we shall endeavor to trespass upon the ground he then so carefully traversed, no farther than is absolutely necessary to render the present report intelligible. Accordingly we shall content ourselves with merely stating the present operations of the Society,

and whatever information of interest may have been received the past year.

First Foreign Stations.

Canton. The Rev. Edwin Stevens who has long been and a faithful and acceptable Chaplain at Canton, has within the last year deemed it his duty to dissolve his connection with the Seamen's Friends Society, and become a Missionary of the American Board to the natives of China. He will, however, continue his Sabbath morning services to Sailors until his successor, the Rev J. W. Newton, ~~who has~~ from Norwich Connecticut, who has been expected to sail early this Spring, shall arrive. During the year previous to the last intelligence the Bethel flag has been displayed nearly every Sabbath at the ship Rimes an chorage at Whampoa, and ~~sometimes~~ the Gospel preached to respectable and ^ serious audiences. Good to the souls of men it is believed has been done, and the Temperance cause, there as every where else among Sailors, has made some considerable progress.

Calcutta.

During the last fourteen years the Missionaries of various denominations in and about that City, notwithstanding the constant pressure of other important duties, have paid considerable attention to Seamen. For several years past, divine services on the Sabbath, and other religious meetings have been held with some irregularity on board of a floating chapel. When no Ministers were found who could conduct these meetings, pious laymen have kindly offered ~~their~~ their services. The brethren there look to America for help, but we regret to state that the American Seamens Friends Society ~~have~~, as yet, been unable to procure a Chaplain for that Station.

Smyrna.

Rev. Josiah Brewer American Missionary to Greece acting as Chaplain. On account of the ~~small number~~ few American vessels in that Port, and the ~~few~~ number of Missionaries in its vicinity the A. S. F. S. have not employed a Chaplain, whose

time has been exclusively devoted to the interests of Seamen. Except when the existence of the plague has rendered the holding of meetings impracticable, divine services for Sailors have been held nearly every Sabbath for the last few years.

Cadiz.

Temporary arrangements have been made for conducting Bethel operations in Cadiz, and the Bethel flag is now displayed there every Sabbath. No port seems likely to afford a better avenue for the introduction of genuine Christianity into the catholic countries of Southern Europe.

Marseilles.

The Rev David De F. Ely formerly Chaplain at Havre, has on account of his knowledge of the French language and character, been transfered to Marseilles. He has commenced his labors there under very favorable circumstances. His prospects for usefulness are great, but at our last intelligence his health was considerably impaired.

Havre.

The Rev. E. N. Sawtell of Louisville Ky has succeeded the Rev Mr Ely as Chaplain at Havre. Since his arrival there his labors have been signally blest. He preaches to crouded and serious audiences, and there is reason to belidve that a few at least have been converted under his ministry. Among other interesting extracts which might be made from the Sailors Magazine respecting the success of Mr. Sawtell's labors at this port we must content ourselves with the following. "We are repeatedly cheered with the accounts received, from time to time, of the onward progress of the Seamen's cause at Havre. The labors of our Chaplain Mr. Sawtell, appear to be blessed abundantly. A new and more commodious place of worship has been prepared, of which they hoped to take possession on the first of the present month. Under date of Jan 30th Mr. Sawtell writes

thus: "The bearer of this can tell you how we are crowded in the Chapel, and I hope soon to be crowded out of it. I have also reason to believe, that the Lord is among us for good. There are many little incidents occurring almost every day, that encourage me in my work, and should cheer the hearts of all who contribute to the funds, or are in any way engaged in promoting the welfare of seamen. "Tell the dear people of America, that we bless them in God's name for providing us with a good anchorage, and such rich provisions for the soul, while in Havre," cries an old weather-beaten tar, as he seized my hand to day, giving it a grip that one might suppose he had mistaken it for a helm in a storm, and which drew tears from my eyes, from more causes than one. "Yes," continued he, "I bless the Lord that I have lived to see the day, when poor Jack is no longer forgotten in the prayers of the Church." "I called sir," says another, "in the name of all the crew, to thank you for the kind words and faithful warnings you have given us since we have been in Havre. I trust, Sir, we shall not forget them. For one, I am determined, in the strength of Jesus, that sin shall never get the weather-gage of me again." A third exclaimed, as he bowed the knee in prayer, "O, Jesus, I thank thee, that thou hast put it into the hearts of thy dear ones in America to erect this light house in Havre, that our poor shipwrecked souls may be guided safely into port." These are the kind of parting salutations and prayers which daily drop from the lips of grateful sailors. When any thing occurs which prevents my seeing them, as they are leaving port, they often send me a written expression of their gratitude.- The following is a specimen: "The crew of the brig Hero, of Scarborough, desire to return sincere thanks to the Minister of the Mariner's Church, for the kind instructions they have received during their stay at Havre; also, for the privilege of the Reading-room; and desire the prayers of the Minister and congregation for their safe arrival at their native land." Now, who, on hearing such expressions of gratitude and such prayers, could not exclaim from the heart "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

"The Ship Switzerland. Continues Mr Saville
"This Ship of Boston, arrived in this port about two weeks

since, when the crew, as might be expected of a temperance vessel, soon found their way to the Chapel. She is certainly a fine ship, and manned with a noble set of men. Every man has his Bible, and a good supply of tracts and temperance almanacs for distribution - together with a library of useful books. On their arrival here, true to their principles, and resolving to keep out of the way of temptation, they traversed the streets of Havre in hopes of finding a Sailor's Home, where the accursed poison was not permitted to enter, and where they could take their Bibles and books, and spend their leisure hours like rational men; but, to the shame of the Christian world be it told, no such place in Havre could be found. They, finally, rented a little shed in an obscure place, where they hoped to remain undisturbed, but the rain coming down in torrents drove them out. They had no alternative, therefore, but to seek shelter in one of these misnomers, called "Sailor's ~~ba~~ boarding-house", selecting, of course, the most decent - if it be not a parador to speak of decency keeping company with rum, gin, and brandy. But they have manfully resisted every temptation thus far - honored their profession, and have been active in doing good; and with all my heart shall I welcome them back to this port. The Lord increase the number of such men and such vessels."

Rio Janeiro.

The Rev. R. M. Johnson has been chaplain to this port since January 1836. We have no facts of peculiar interest to communicate.

Sandwich Islands.

At two of the ports most frequented by our whaling vessels the Bethel flag is erected and reading rooms are established - viz at Honolulu in the Island of Oahu, Rev John Diell chaplain - and at Lahaina in the Island of Maui, where the Rev. Mr. Spaulding - American Missionary to that place conducts Bethel operations. The last Annual Reports of both these gentlemen inform us that since the whale fisheries off the coast of Japan, have been unusually profitable, the number of vessels yearly visiting ports is constantly increasing - that the Reading rooms are much frequented -

temperance and good order much more prevalent than formerly, and that souls have been hopefully converted under their ministry. The following extract from the Report of the Rev. Mr. Spaulding we think will be interesting to all the members of the Society. After allunding to the energetic and successful measures pursued for the last eleven years by the Governor of the Island of Maui, enterely to suppress on that Island and within its ports, the manufacture, use, and vending of ardent Spirits (in which we are happy to add he is almost invariably sustained by the captains of our own, and foreign vessels) as well as to the growing sentiment vavorable to temperance among seamen themselves, he thus proceeds. "Temperance prepares the way of the Lord. Never has the truth of this remark been more obvious to us than during the past year. Within a few weeks, we have seen most decisive evidences of the Holy Spirit among seamen. The revial, if so it may be called, commenced upon Japan, through the distribution of a few tracts by a pious Captain. Captain B. spoke a ship, and after an interview with the master, requested permission to send a few tracts on board. Having ascertained the names of some of the crew, he addressed a tract ~~to~~ to each, writing each man's name upon the cover. One "incorrigible sinner," as he afterwards called himself, was awakened by the tract addressed to him, entitled "The incorrigible sinner forewarned of his doom." From this, a work of grace commenced, and soon two sailors entertained hopes in the Saviour. This ship soon fell in company with another, and the conversation of those first awakened was the means of awakening others; and when the two ships reached this place, two sailors on board of each were rejoicing in hope. The Master of another ship, having been ill for some time, unexpectedly recovered his health. He then began to think on the goodness of God, and with this reflection, became serious. For some weeks he continued seeking, but found no relief. In this state of mind he came to this place, and after a solemn meeting one evening, in which those who

had recently joined the Saviour came out boldly on the Lord's side, he returned to his ship— entered his state room— prostrated himself before the Lord, and there found peace in believing. He was enabled to give up all for Christ, and the Saviour, we trust, took up his abode with him. At the next evening meeting, in the presence of many seamen, he related, with the most intense interest, what the Lord had done for his soul. The Holy Spirit was with us. Others became serious, but they are all afloat again upon the deep, and what will be the result of their impressions is known only to Him in whose hands are the hearts of all men."

Gallipagos' Islands.

These Islands are situated near the equator, about six hundred miles west of South America. Within a few years a colony of those who were formerly, Soldiers, Sailors or Convicts of the State Prison, was planted there by ~~Mr.~~ Joseph Villamil Esq. under the patronage of the Aequador Government. As the number of Whaling vessels visiting ~~that~~ those Islands to obtain supplies, has rapidly increased for several years, and as there is a prospect of exerting a salutary influence upon the inhabitants themselves, the A. S. F. S. has thought fit as soon as they can procure the man and the means to establish a Chaplaincy there. Though Mr. Villamil and all the Colonists are Roman Catholics, yet he has in the most kind and explicit manner assured the S. F. S. that a Chaplain shall be welcome to those Islands, and that free religious toleration shall ever be cheerfully granted.

Cronstadt.

On the 15th of March John C. Webster, was ordained a Chaplain to Cronstadt in Russia. The exercises took place in the north congregational meeting house Newburyport Mass. Cronstadt is the grand port of St Petersburgh, about 20 miles south from that place. It has a population of 40,000, of whom 10,000 are said to be sailors.

Constantinople.

The Missionaries in its vicinity have lately presented the claims of this port to the A. S. F. S. They believe that a Chaplain stationed here would exert an extensive influence, not merely on American and English seamen, but also on those from the Catholic countries of southern Europe, and might thus be instrumental in introducing Protestantism into those countries.

The A. S. F. S. have also established agencies to promote the Bethel cause at ~~Java~~ Batavia and Singapore, through the medium of our American Missionaries.

Second. Atlantic Seaports. Upon the remaining subjects of this report we must necessarily be brief, and in order to be more brief and precise we shall in some instances use the language of the last Annual Report of the A. S. F. S. only with such additions and alterations as later intelligence shall render necessary. "As we trace along the coast of the Atlantic, and the Gulf of Mexico, from Eastport to New Orleans, we find sixteen Bethel Chapels, situated at the ports of Eastport, Bath, Portland, Salem, Boston, New Bedford, Mystic, New-York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston Savannah, Pensacola, and Mobile. In Eastport and Bath, public worship is held for the benefit of sailors occasionally, and generally by the resident clergyman of those places. In Savannah, the winter season only is improved. In Pensacola an arrangement has recently been made by this society with the Rev. Mr. Steele, the Episcopal clergyman of that place, to devote a portion of his time to the instruction of the seamen. In Mobile, it will be recollected, that this Society sustained a Chaplain last year. "The Mobile Port Society" has since been formed, and the support of that establishment assumed to themselves. In all the other ports named, constant worship is maintained, and supported by local Societies. In several other ports some efforts are made for the advancement of religion among sailors."

New Orleans.

Bethel operations have been carried on here since 1829 but with frequent and long interuptions. The Bethel Chapel which was commenced about 1830- but has since been left in an unfinished and ruinous condition, would probably have been finished during the last year, had it not been indicted as a nuisance and consequently been ordered by the Executive of our government to be removed from the United States' ground upon which it was erected. We fear that this will seriously injure the Bethel cause at New Orleans. We feel grateful however to learn that during the last winter, a suitable room for a seamen's Chapell has been procured and the Bethel flag again erected.

The Annual Reports of many of the Port Societies are full of interest, and afford conclusive evidence that their labors of love have not been in vain. Want of time will permit us only to present a short extract of the Eighth Annual Report of the Boston S. F. S. "Displays of grace large and free have been manifested by our God to our Seamen's Zion. It was noticed at the time our last Report was read, that there were special indications of divine favor towards the church and congregation which worship at the Mariner's Church. Since then, we would acknowledge with gratitude to the great head of the church, that he has given evidence that our labors have not been in vain in the Lord. Never since the world began it is believed, has the reform among seamen in this port been so apparent as the past year. Meetings designed for Seamen were never so fully attended. In the great congregation, and in less public assemblies, there has been a fixedness of attention and a solemnity of manner, which proclaimed that it was to the Sailor the acceptable year of the Lord. It is impossible to ascertain the number of those who give evidence of a change of heart; but it is known that very many seamen who were one year ago living without God and without hope in the world, are now looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ. Three vessels, since our last annual meeting, have entered this port, on board of which there have been

revivals of religion. Every man on board of one except the cook, gave evidence that they had been born of God. Interviews of a most interesting character have been held with some of those men, who hope they have ~~but~~ passed from death unto life."

Third. Inland Waters. The cause of sailors and boatmen on the great lakes, rivers, and canals, in the Western country, is rising in importance every year. During the past year the friends of that cause at Buffalo, and the vicinity, believing it demanded more direct attention than it had ever received, formed a society, called the "Sailors and Boatmen's Friend Society" which they proposed should take the oversight of the Sailor's and Boatmen's cause in that section of country. A periodical, called "The Bethel Magazine," is issued by that society, which is well calculated to advance its interests. Bethel Ministers are now established at Cleaveland, Buffalo, Utica, Schenectady, Troy, and Oswego; and in each place, except the last two named, there are regularly organized Christian churches, two of which, viz. those at Cleveland and Buffalo have been organized within two years." At Albany a Bethel Society has been formed, but no efficient measures have been adopted by that flourishing City to promote the religious instruction of Seamen. The number of individuals employed in navigating our inland waters amounts to eighty thousand besides an almost equal number who are engaged in similar employments, who should be ranked among our watermen. This multitude of fellow travellers to ~~eternity~~ [illegible] has hitherto been almost entirely destitute of the means of grace.

~~Third~~ Fourth. Means of improvement.

Temperance. A large number of Temperance Almanacs, and other temperance publications, are annually distributed among seamen, which are doing much to advance the temperance cause among them. We have already several times alluded, incidentally, to the progress of temperance among Seamen and shown that it prepares the way of the Lord. To prove that in like manner promotes their health, and all their other temporal interests, time will only permit us to adduce a single fact." On the 20th of February 1836, arrived at

Baltimore the Brig Canada Captain Robert Hardie, from a voyage around the globe. In 586 days she ran ~~63, 586~~ 63, 560 miles, more than twice the distance around the world, and crossed almost all habitable latitudes. She had 16 hands on board who used during the whole time no intoxicating drinks, and who all ~~returned~~ returned home without a days sickness.

Sailors Boarding Houses. It is now deemed impracticable ~~thor~~ thoroughly to reform the character of the Sailor, as long as he is obliged, while in port, to put up at houses which are the abodes of pollution. Says an experienced seaman, "I assert without fear of contradiction, for I speak from close observation, that so long as the present system for Boarding Houses for seamen exists with the hundred sinks of vice and iniquity inseperably connected with them, the Philanthropist might as well attempt to stem the mighty torrent of Niagara, or grasp the mist of the morning, as to turn back the current which so surely sets the unconscious Sailor on the rocks and quicksands of destruction". Accordingly in many of our ports, respectable temperance boarding houses for sailors have been established, some of which are superintended by pious persons, where the sailor is removed from temptations to sensuality and crime. These institutions receive the patronage of the sons of the Ocean. The Sailor's home at Boston is undoubtedly superior to any institution of the kind in our country.

Saving Banks. In the few places where these have been established they have effected considerable in promoting the temporal interests of Seamen and we hope the time is not far distant when they will be as celebrated for their economy as they have hitherto been for their prodigality.

Distribution of Bibles, Tracts, Religious books.

This subject has received a large share of the attention of those interested in the cause of Seamen. In most parts

of our country, even where no other measures have been adopted to promote the Bethel cause, boats and vessels of every de=scription are to a considerable extent supplied with Bibles, Tracts, and Religious Books. The seed sown has taken root, sprung up, and brought forth fruit to the honor and glory of God. Those engaged in the instruction of seamen assure us that they frequently meet with individuals, who under God, attribute their conversion to the reading of the Bible or some religious publication "I am convinced from observation" writes the Rev Mr Spaulding, "that there is no class of men who will more certainly read what is put into their hands than Seamen of the Pacific. For they are generally destitute, often even of a Bible, and their situation almost com=pels them to read something. While cruising for whales they have much leisure time often hanging heavily upon them. They are frequently calling for something with which to fill up their minds. Who will supply this vacuum with the bread of life."

Foreign & British Sailors Society. Though this is os=tensibly a Foreign as well as a domestic Society, yet it has hitherto confined its operations to the ports of the United kingdoms of Great Britain. Within these limits its labors have far exceeded those of the A.S.F.S. and much good has been effected. The last Annual Report states "that the Directors have reason to believe that there are now at least 8,00 British merchant vessels which are dedicated to God as Bethel ships - that that there are the same Number of pious Captains, and probaly not less than 7,000 truly christian British Seamen."

Soldiers. We refer this whole subject to our essayist whose long intercourse and extensive acquaintance with that class of our fellow men, and with all the pecu=liarities of their condition qualify him to enter fully into its merits.

In Conclusion your Committee would only add, that every circumstance seems at present favorable for the spread spread of the Gospel among Seamen, except the temptations

to dissipation which still every where beset the sailors footsteps, the evil influence of the long established practice of paying advanced wages. But above all the criminal apathy of the Church upon this momentous subject. Could but the Church be awakened from her apathy and induced to labor and pray for the conversion of Seamen, the promises of God and the tokens for good which have attended the feeble efforts already made to promote the Bethel cause, authorize us to say that a rich blessing would crown all her philanthropic exertions. We commend this good cause to your hearts and to the kind Care and guardianship of God.

In behalf of the Committee
on Seamen & Soldiers
T. Snyder.

May 1837